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Express Mail Label No. ER 499504807 US
Attorney Docket No. 001-041800US

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Patent Application of

Confirmation No.: 7010

Claude L. Rickerd

Application No.: 10/600,416

Group Art Unit: 3629

Filed: 19 June 2003

Examiner: Not Yet Assigned

For: CONNECTION ASSEMBLY FOR USE WITH SPLITTABLE SHEATH

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING BY EXPRESS MAIL

Sir:

The undersigned hereby certifies that the attached:

1. Information Disclosure statement (5 pages), in duplicate;
2. Form PTO-1449 (1 page), in duplicate;
3. Copy of 5 cited references;
4. Certificate of Mailing by express mail; and
5. Return postcard.

all relating to the above application were deposited as "Express Mail", Mailing Label No. ER 499504807 US with the United States Postal Service, addressed to Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on 11 December 2003.

12/11/2003
Date

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**INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT
PURSUANT TO 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.56, 1.97, AND 1.98**

Sir:

The Examiner is respectfully requested to consider the patents, patent applications, publications, or other information cataloged on the enclosed Form PTO-1449 during examination of the above-identified patent application. The order of presentation of the references should not be construed as an indication of importance. These references are submitted for the Examiner's consideration and are submitted pursuant to an Applicant's duty of disclosure under 37 C.F.R. § 1.56.

Copies of all of the cited documents

☒ are enclosed unless otherwise indicated on the enclosed Form PTO-1449.

☐ have been previously furnished to the Office in prior application No. _____, filed _____, which the present application relies upon for an earlier effective filing date under 35 U.S.C. § 120. Therefore, no copies of the cited documents are included herewith pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.98(d); MPEP § 609(III)(A)(2).

☐ are enclosed unless they are U.S. patents or U.S. patent application publications, which are not enclosed since this application was filed after 30 June 2003. See "Information Disclosure Statements May Be Filed Without Copies of U.S. Patents and Published Applications in Patent Applications filed after June 30, 2003," 1273 Off. Gaz. Pat. Off. (5 Aug. 2003).

I
BASIS

This information disclosure statement is filed pursuant to

☒ 37 C.F.R. § 1.97(b).

This information disclosure statement is filed either (1) within three months of the filing date of a national application other than a continued prosecution application under 37 C.F.R. § 1.53(d); (2) within three months of the date of entry of the national stage as set forth in 37 C.F.R. § 1.491 in an international application; (3) before the mailing date of a first Office action on the merits; or (4) before the mailing of a first Office action after the filing of a request for continued examination under 37 C.F.R. § 1.114, whichever event occurs last.

Accordingly, this information disclosure statement requires no fee and no certification.

☐ 37 C.F.R. § 1.97(c).

This information disclosure statement is filed after the period specified in 37 C.F.R. § 1.97(b), but before the mailing date of any of (1) a final action under 37 C.F.R. § 1.113; (2) a notice of allowance under 37 C.F.R. § 1.311; or (3) an action that otherwise closes prosecution in the application.

Accordingly, this information disclosure statement requires either the fee specified in 37 C.F.R. § 1.17(p) for submission of an information disclosure statement under 37 C.F.R. § 1.97(c), or a statement under 37 C.F.R. § 1.97(e).

☐ 37 C.F.R. § 1.97(d).

This information disclosure statement is filed after the period specified in 37 C.F.R. § 1.97(c) since a

☐ final action under 37 C.F.R. § 1.113

☐ notice of allowance under 37 C.F.R. § 1.311

was mailed to the Applicant(s) on _____. The issue fee has not been paid herein.

Accordingly, this information disclosure statement requires the fee set forth in 37 C.F.R. § 1.17(p) to consider an information disclosure statement under 37 C.F.R. § 1.97(d), and a statement under 37 C.F.R. § 1.97(e).

If this statement crosses in the mail with an Office action, or is otherwise not in the indicated category of 37 C.F.R. § 1.97, it is respectfully requested that this statement be treated

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Application No. 10/600,416
Attorney Docket No. 001-041800US

in the next appropriate category and made of record. To the extent required, please treat this paper as a conditional petition for acceptance of the information disclosure statement.

II FEES

Any required fee is being paid as indicated below by an enclosed check or our deposit account.

- ☒ [X] No fee is due.
- ☐ [] The \$ _____ fee specified in 37 C.F.R. § 1.17(p) for submission of an information disclosure statement under 37 C.F.R. § 1.197(c) or (d) is due.
- ☐ [] A check is enclosed for the required fee.
- ☐ [] Please charge the required fee to our deposit account no. _____. A duplicate copy of this information disclosure statement is enclosed.
- ☒ [X] The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional required fees or credit any overpayments associated with this information disclosure statement to our deposit account no. 502885. A duplicate copy of this information disclosure statement is enclosed.

III CERTIFICATION

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.97(e), I state as follows:

- ☒ [X] No statement is necessary.
- ☐ [] Each item of information contained in this information disclosure statement was first cited in a communication from a foreign patent office in a counterpart foreign application not more than three months prior to the filing of this information disclosure statement. 37 C.F.R. § 1.97(e)(1).
- ☐ [] No item of information contained in this information disclosure statement was cited in a communication from a foreign patent office in a counterpart foreign application, and, to my knowledge after making reasonable inquiry, no item of information contained in this information disclosure statement was known to any individual designated in 37 C.F.R. § 1.56(c) more than three months prior to the filing of this information disclosure statement. 37 C.F.R. § 1.97(e)(2).

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.704(d), I state as follows:

- ☐ Each item of information contained in this information disclosure statement was cited in a communication from a foreign patent office in a counterpart application, and this communication was not received by any individual designated in 37 C.F.R. § 1.56(c) more than thirty days prior to the filing of this information disclosure statement.

IV FOREIGN LANGUAGE REFERENCES

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.98(a)(3)(i), any information disclosure statement filed under 37 C.F.R. § 1.97 shall include a concise explanation of the relevance, as it is presently understood by the individual designated in § 1.56(c) most knowledgeable about the content of the information, of each patent, publication, or other information listed that is not in the English language. The concise explanation may be either separate from the specification or incorporated therein. In compliance with the rules, the Applicant(s) state as follows:

- ☒ No concise explanation is required since all cited references are in English.
- ☐ A concise explanation of the relevance of one or more foreign language references is attached.
- ☐ According to the procedural policy adopted by the PTO with regard to disclosure requirements, the Applicant is satisfying the disclosure requirement pursuant to MPEP § 609(III)(A)(3) by submitting herewith the following:
 - ☐ English language versions of any non-English language documents.
 - ☐ English language versions of one or more search reports or other actions by one or more foreign patent offices in one or more counterpart foreign applications, which indicate the degree of relevance found by the foreign office(s).

The Applicant has not analyzed these documents and, therefore, declines to comment on their relevance at this time.

- ☐ One or more English language abstracts for the non-English language references are also enclosed.

**V
REMARKS**

It is respectfully requested that

- (1) the Examiner sign the enclosed Form PTO-1449 to evidence that the cited information has been fully considered by the Patent and Trademark Office during the examination of this application; and
- (2) the citations for the cited information be printed on any patent that issues from this application.

The submission of this information disclosure statement by the Applicant(s) shall not be construed as a representation that a search has been performed or that no other material information under 37 C.F.R. § 1.56 exists. See 37 C.F.R. § 1.97(g).

The submission of this information disclosure statement by the Applicant(s) shall not be construed as an admission that any information cited or referred to herein is, or is considered to be, material to the patentability of one or more of the pending claims in this application pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.56(b), unless specifically designated by the Applicant(s) as such. See 37 C.F.R. § 1.97(h).

The submission of this information disclosure statement by the Applicant(s) shall not be construed as an admission that any information cited or referred to herein is, or is considered to be, or even qualifies as "prior art" under 35 U.S.C. § 102 with respect to this invention, unless specifically designated by the Applicant(s) as such.

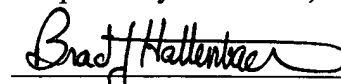
Notwithstanding any statements by the Applicant(s), the Examiner is urged to form his or her own conclusion regarding the relevance of the cited information.

**VI
CONCLUSION**

The Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned attorney to discuss any questions concerning this information disclosure statement or any of the information cited or referred to herein.

Date: 11 December 2003

Respectfully submitted,

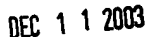


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Approved for use through 07/31/2006. OMB 0651-0031

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Substitute for form 1449/PTO

(Use as many sheets as necessary)

Sheet	1	of	1
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Complete if Known

Application Number	10/600,416
Filing Date	19 June 2003
First Named Inventor	Claude L. Rickert
Art Unit	3629
Examiner Name	Not yet assigned
Attorney Docket Number	001-041800US

U. S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

[illegible]

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

[illegible]

Date Considered

*EXAMINER: Initial if reference considered, whether or not citation is in conformance with MPEP 609. Draw line through citation if not in conformance and not considered. Include copy of this form with next communication to applicant. ¹ Applicant's unique citation designation number (optional). ² See Kinds Codes of USPTO Patent Documents at www.uspto.gov or MPEP 901.04. ³ Enter Office that issued the document, by the two-letter code (WIPO Standard ST.3). ⁴ For Japanese patent documents, the indication of the year of the reign of the Emperor must precede the serial number of the patent document. ⁵ Kind of document by the appropriate symbols as indicated on the document under WIPO Standard ST.16 if possible. ⁶ Applicant is to place a check mark here if English language Translation is attached.

This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98. The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 2 hours to complete, including gathering, preparing, and submitting the completed application form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450. **DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. SEND TO: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.**

If you need assistance in completing the form, call 1-800-PTO-9199 (1-800-786-9199) and select option 2.